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Blood Alcohol Legal Level Increase

An estimated 58,500 people in Michigan sustain a TBI annually

An estimated 98,000 people in Michigan (excluding returning service members) currently live with lifelong disabilities as a result of a TBI

TBI is the leading cause of death and disability in children and adolescents

Falls result in the greatest number of TBI-related hospitalizations

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of TBI-related death

Issue

Two recently introduced bills (HB 4547, Kesto – R- Commerce Township and HB 4548, Green, P. – D-Warren) will eliminate the sunset provision for 0.08 blood alcohol level limit requirements for certain alcohol-related offenses (4547) and for certain alcohol related driving violations (4548). Section 257.625 (1) (b) of the Michigan Vehicle Code currently states that the term “operating while intoxicated” is defined as, “The person has an alcohol content of 0.08 grams or more per 100 milliliters of blood, per 210 liters of breath, or per 67 milliliters of urine, or, **beginning October 1, 2018, the person has an alcohol content of 0.10 grams or more per 100 milliliters of blood, per 210 liters of breath, or per 67 milliliters of urine.**”

Background

In 2007, SB 104 was passed enforcing stricter standards for the registration, titling, sale and overall regulation of vehicles on auto dealers, chauffeurs and operators. Part of this needed legislation, however, also incorporated a “sunset” provision that was supposed to increase the blood alcohol legal limit from .08 to .10, effective October 1, 2013. In 2013, HB 4567 (P.A. 219) was passed that moved the effective date of that increase from October 1, 2013 to the impending date of October 1, 2018.

Our Position

According to statistics from the Michigan State Police, an average of 37.1% motor vehicle deaths from 2004 to 2014 involved alcohol and/or drugs. Motor vehicle crashes are also the second-leading cause of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and the leading cause of TBI-related deaths in Michigan.

To knowingly and legally provide the opportunity for more alcohol-impaired drivers to operate their vehicles on our state’s roads by raising the blood alcohol legal limit seems incomprehensible.

The Brain Injury Association of Michigan strongly supports HB 4547 and HB4548 and is opposed to any increase in the current blood alcohol legal limit of 0.08.